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Security Council

Fifty-seventh year

Provisional

4552nd meeting

Thursday, 13 June 2002, 11.40 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Wehbe	(Syrian Arab Republic)
Members:	Bulgaria	Mr. Tafrov
	Cameroon	Mr. Tidjani
	China	Mr. Zhang Yishan
	Colombia	Mr. Franco
	France	Mr. Levitte
	Guinea	Mr. Fall
	Ireland	Mr. Ryan
	Mauritius	Mr. Ramjuttun
	Mexico	Mr. Aguilar Zinser
	Norway	Mr. Kolby
	Russian Federation	Mr. Lavrov
	Singapore	Mr. Mahbubani
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Eldon
	United States of America	Mr. Rosenblatt

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

Letter dated 11 June 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Bahrain to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2002/655)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

02-42279 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 11.40 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

Letter dated 11 June 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Bahrain to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2002/655)

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Bahrain, Cuba, Egypt, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Israel, Japan, Jordan, Kuwait, Malaysia, Morocco, Pakistan, South Africa, Spain, the Sudan, Tunisia and Turkey, in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Lancry (Israel) took a seat at the Council table; Mr. Buallay (Bahrain), Mr. Rodríguez Parrilla (Cuba), Mr. Aboul Gheit (Egypt), Mr. Hidayat (Indonesia), Mr. Nejad Hosseinian (Islamic Republic of Iran), Mr. Aldouri (Iraq), Mr. Haneda (Japan), Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein (Jordan), Mr. Al-Otaibi (Kuwait), Mr. Hasmy (Malaysia), Mr. Bennouna (Morocco), Mr. Akram (Pakistan), Ms. Ndhlovu (South Africa), Mr. Arias (Spain), Mr. Erwa (Sudan), Mr. Mejdoub (Tunisia) and Mr. Cengizer (Turkey) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter dated 12 June 2002 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations, which will be issued as document S/2002/658 and which reads as follows:

> "I have the honour to request that, in accordance with its previous practice, the Security Council invite the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations to participate in the meeting of the Security Council to be held tomorrow, Thursday, 13 June 2002, regarding the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem."

I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite the Permanent Observer of Palestine to participate in the meeting, in accordance with the Council's provisional rules of procedure and with previous practice in this regard.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Al-Kidwa (Palestine) took a seat at the Council table.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I should also like to inform the Council that I have received a letter dated 12 June 2002 from the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, which reads as follows:

> "In my capacity as Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, I have the honour to request that I be invited to participate in the debate on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, under rule 39 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council."

On previous occasions, the Security Council has extended invitations to representatives of other United Nations bodies in connection with the consideration of matters on its agenda. In conformity with past practice in this matter, I propose that the Council extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, Mr. Papa Louis Fall, to take the seat reserved for him at the side of the Council Chamber.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The Council is meeting in response to the request contained in the letter dated 11 June 2002 from the

Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Bahrain to the United Nations, document S/2002/655.

I should like to draw the attention of the members of the Council to the following documents: S/2002/617, S/2002/641, S/2002/650 and S/2002/654, letters dated 4, 6, 10 and 11 June 2002 respectively, from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations; and S/2002/620 and S/2002/642, letters dated 5 and 6 June 2002 respectively, from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations.

The first speaker inscribed on my list is the Permanent Observer of Palestine, on whom I now call.

Mr. Al-Kidwa (Palestine) (*spoke in Arabic*): Let me start, Sir, by congratulating you on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the current month. We express our pride in seeing you, the representative of sisterly Syria, in the presidency of the Council, and we pay tribute to the great skill and efficiency you have displayed in moving the work of the Council forward. Our thanks also go to your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of Singapore, and to the members of his delegation for their skilful and efficient stewardship of the Council during the past month. I would further like to thank all members of the Council for responding to the Arab Group's request, made by the representative of the Kingdom of Bahrain, to convene this important meeting of the Security Council.

On 10 June, Israeli occupation forces reoccupied the Palestinian city of Ramallah, from which they withdrew last night, and imposed a military curfew on the headquarters of the President of the Palestinian Authority, President Yasser Arafat, in that city. A few days earlier, the occupation forces attacked the President's compound with tank shells and bombarded most of the buildings in the compound. In the course of that operation, two people were killed and the personal safety of President Arafat was undoubtedly put at immediate risk. Throughout that period, the Israeli occupation forces maintained a tight siege on Palestinian cities, and on several occasions reoccupied them for days, killing many civilians, abducting many more citizens and laying waste to many institutions; this threatens the present and the future of the Palestinian people.

In addition, Israel has feverishly tried to institutionalize the appalling situation resulting from the military assault against our people. It has removed the lines that define the areas under the control of the Palestinian Authority under signed agreements, by isolating residential areas in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip from one another and isolating all such areas from occupied East Jerusalem, by reinstating military administration and by requiring licenses to move people and goods from one Palestinian city to another.

Furthermore, the colonization of our Palestinian land continues unabated through the building of more and more illegitimate settlements, including the settlement activity that is now in its initial stages on Mount Scopus in East Jerusalem. Since 28 September 2000 and, on a greater scale, since 29 March 2002, Israel, the occupying Power, has committed great atrocities against the Palestinian people, including undoubted war crimes and acts of State-sponsored terrorism. We are, of course, waiting for the issuance of the report of the Secretary-General on recent Israeli actions in Jenin and other Palestinian cities, as requested in General Assembly resolution ES-10/10, adopted during the tenth emergency special session. As we await that report, we call upon the international community and the Security Council to condemn all such acts and to take serious steps to put an end to them immediately, as they represent a gross violation of the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention and other international humanitarian legal instruments, as well as of Security Council resolutions.

Israel has blatantly rejected the relevant Security Council resolutions; indeed, it has shown contempt for them. How can the Security Council allow this situation to continue? When will Security Council resolutions — in particular the recent resolutions 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002) — be implemented?

Israel, the occupying Power, claims that all its acts of destruction and suppression are designed to pre-empt suicide bombings — bombings that we, for our part, have condemned time and again. Israel's claim cannot be taken seriously. It is not acting in self-defence, and its actions will yield only counterproductive results that will not serve its declared objectives.

The true political purpose of all of Israel's actions is to take us back to the period before the Oslo Accords. Their purpose is to destroy the Palestinian Authority and to prevent any final settlement between the two sides so that Israel's process of colonizing the

territory can continue, with more and more settlements being built, thereby preventing the establishment of a Palestinian State, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

In the past, we have said that Mr. Sharon and his Government want to kill off any attempt to salvage the Oslo Accords and end the deteriorating situation on the ground. Specifically, we referred to the fact that Mr. Sharon would like to make the Mitchell recommendations a dead letter. In this context, he has devised various scenarios, the most significant of which is his insistence on seven days of complete calm. Regrettably, some have covered for him, and Mr. Sharon has indeed succeeded in aborting progress on the Mitchell recommendations.

Now, Mr. Sharon has come up with a new idea. He is insisting that there is no Palestinian partner for him to work with and refusing to negotiate until changes have been made on the Palestinian side. Palestinian issues remain entirely a matter for the Palestinians; Israel has nothing at all to do with them.

However, an evolution of the domestic Palestinian situation and the rebuilding of its infrastructure is in the national Palestinian interest. For our part, we are working seriously to move in that direction. But it must be made clear that the creation of genuine and strong State institutions will be impossible while we are under occupation and, in particular, while we are dealing with unabated and deliberate Israeli destruction.

It must also be made clear that Mr. Sharon's true purpose is to cause further devastation and, if possible, to create a state of chaos on the Palestinian side. In that way Mr. Sharon believes that he will be able to put an end to the entire peace process.

The international community, which has not succeeded in preventing Mr. Sharon from killing off the Mitchell recommendations, should prevent him from stifling all hopes for peace before it is too late. If people need further proof of the true attitude and genuine intentions of Mr. Sharon, they need only read his ignominious article, published in *The New York Times* on 9 June. Mr. Sharon's complete and blatant sabotage of Security Council resolution 242 (1967) in itself should be vigorously condemned by the Security Council, given the dire consequences of such sabotage. Of course, Sharon did not stop there, but reiterated his well-known rejection of any attempt at a bilateral settlement between the two sides, at this stage or in the future, insisting on only a long-term interim solution. Sharon repeated his lies and made ludicrous comments about the idea of an international conference, ending by taking a clear position on the issues of the borders and Jerusalem that, in essence, represents a total rejection of the initiative of Crown Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia — an initiative that, after being adopted at the Beirut Arab Summit, has become an overall Arab initiative.

It is well known that Mr. Sharon was implicated in war crimes, massacres, including at Sabra, Shatila, Kibya, Khan Younis and, most recently, perhaps — pending receipt of the report of the Secretary-General — in the Jenin refugee camp. Furthermore, Mr. Sharon is now taking on — with great conviction — the role of the enemy of peace. This man must be stopped; that would represent the beginning of a return to the path of peace.

Only a comprehensive approach that addressed all aspects of the problem — political, economic and security — could salvage any hope from this true tragedy and help to build peace in the region. More important, such an approach would require the development of a clear definition of the final form of the resolution of the problem. This definition would include the emergence of the State of Palestine in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, with East Jerusalem as its capital, on the basis of the 1967 borders, guaranteed security for Israel and other countries of the region and the establishment of normal relations among all these States. The existence of such a clear definition of the final solution would in itself create a new and different dynamic allowing all other major aspects to be addressed, including the current security situation and the creation of State institutions, an international presence on the ground, the proposed mechanism for negotiations between the parties — that is, the international conference — and even interim steps towards the final objective, so long as a specific time frame is spelled out.

That is precisely what we need; in the absence of such a vision, we will continue, at best, to remain in a vicious circle. My fear is that we will descend into more dangerous conditions in Palestine and, indeed, throughout the entire Middle East.

What do we want from the Security Council? From our point of view, there are three priorities. First, Israel's practices against the Palestinian people must be

condemned and ended, while the outcome of the voiding of the Oslo Accords — including the preservation and maintenance of the Palestinian Authority — must be rejected. Secondly, efforts must be made to implement the relevant Security Council resolutions. Such efforts are an official responsibility of the Security Council as a matter of principle, but are particularly significant in view of the critical and deteriorating conditions on the ground. Thirdly, a campaign for a comprehensive approach towards a solution must be engaged, allowing the Council to play its natural role in this regard.

We want the Security Council to take the required measures immediately, because — in all honesty and candour — the situation, particularly with regard to the intolerable conditions in which our people are living, does not allow for any delay. Some members of the Council hold a different view. We have been clearly informed that there is a serious political impetus to address the situation on the ground and to push towards political action and that important developments are anticipated shortly. We have also been informed that meetings of the "quartet" and the Group of 8 are to be convened that may make a positive contribution to the issue.

Given all this, we, along with the entire world, shall wait and see what happens in the next few days. We do so while we continue to maintain that the Security Council has its own Charter responsibilities and a natural role in the question of Palestine and the situation in the Middle East.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I call on the representative of Israel.

Mr. Lancry (Israel): In the days between 30 March and 4 April, the Council adopted two resolutions on the situation in the Middle East — resolutions 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002) — in which it first and foremost reiterated its earlier calls for a meaningful ceasefire and placed specific demands on both parties to help bring this about.

For Israel's part, we withdrew our troops from Palestinian cities, including Ramallah; successfully negotiated a peaceful end to the stand-off at the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem; and redeployed our forces to the perimeters of population centres so as to enable the Palestinian leadership to assert its authority and fulfil its obligations. Those obligations included adherence to a meaningful ceasefire; an end to all acts of violence, terror and incitement; cooperation with Special Envoy Zinni; and the implementation of the Tenet work plan.

To this day, we still await any steps taken by the Palestinian leadership towards the fulfilment of its obligations. Not a single day has passed since the adoption of resolution 1402 (2002) in which Palestinian terrorists have not attempted to carry out attacks against Israeli civilians. On many days, they have succeeded. On days when they have failed, it has only been as a result of the preventive actions of Israeli security forces that have successfully thwarted dozens of attempted attacks. What some have taken to calling "incursions" are in reality preventive actions that have saved countless innocent lives. As those engaged in the war on terror know, to succeed against terrorists, they must be thwarted before they reach the civilian population centres that they so brutally target.

The devastating impact of Palestinian terror continues. On 5 June, a Palestinian suicide terrorist driving a car packed with explosives blew himself up alongside a public bus near the northern town of Afula, killing 17 Israelis and injuring over 30. On 27 May, a Palestinian suicide bomber blew himself up at the entrance to a crowded shopping centre in the Israeli city of Petah Tikva, killing two Israelis — an 18-month-old baby girl and her grandmother — and wounding more than 50. On 23 May, a Palestinian suicide bomber blew himself up in the centre of the Israeli city of Rishon Lezion, killing two Israelis and wounding more than 40 others. On the same day, Palestinian terrorists attempted to blow up a truck at the Pi-Gliloth petroleum and gas storage facility in Herzliya — an attack that, had it succeeded, would have entailed not only a massive civilian catastrophe, but a severe environmental one as well. On 7 May, a Palestinian suicide bomber blew himself up in a crowded pool hall in Rishon Lezion, killing 15 Israelis and wounding nearly 60 others. On 27 April, three Palestinian terrorists entered the community of Adora and went door to door, entering private residents and opening fire on those inside. The terrorists murdered five-year-old Danielle Shefi as she lay in her bed, and three other Israeli civilians.

The long and tragic list goes on. Many times it was Chairman Arafat's forces that were responsible. On other occasions, it was organizations and individuals who are recognized for their terrorist activities and whose arrest Israel has repeatedly

requested, but who continue to freely roam the streets, at liberty to plan and to carry out attacks at their discretion. The situation persists despite the presence of tens of thousands of Palestinian security personnel who are more than capable of bringing them to justice and who are legally obligated to do so.

On still other occasions, terror has emanated from other regimes beyond our borders. The Government of Syria, whose Permanent Representative currently occupies the presidency of the Council, continues to support and to encourage acts of violence against Israeli civilians. The terrorist organization Islamic Jihad, which claimed responsibility for the 5 June bombing in a statement released by the organization's headquarters in Damascus, is but one of numerous terrorist organizations based in the Syrian capital. Hezbollah terrorists based in the south of Lebanon, with the consent and support of the Syrian regime, continue to launch cross-border assaults in direct violation of Council resolutions. The glorification of suicide attacks is a common feature of its political discourse, as typified by the broadcast of Radio Damascus; On 9 May 20002, this radio station stated,

> "The wonderful and special suicide attacks, which were executed by some of the sons of the Palestinian nation, is a practical declaration before the whole world of the way to liberate Arab Palestinian land from Israeli colonialism."

Such activities testify to Syria's utter contempt for the provisions of international law and for the anti-terrorist objectives of the Council and the international community. Moreover, they serve to unmask the unbearable contradiction between, on the one hand, the very nature of the Syrian Arab Republic's sponsorship of terrorism and its practice of State terrorism and, on the other, its membership on the Council — let alone its Council presidency.

But Syrian contempt does not end with its sponsorship of Palestinian terror. Its disregard for the basic humanitarian values extends to its occupation and foreign domination of Lebanon as well. In this forum and in others, Syria has time and again accused Israel of war crimes. Such a heinous allegation cannot for one moment erase from the collective memory of the international community the real war crimes and mass murder perpetrated by the Syrian regime against its own citizens in the city of Hama in 1982. Israel is appalled by the conduct of the Syrian Government, its obstruction of the path to peace in the region and its subversion of any efforts for reconciliation between Israel and its neighbours, all the more so in the light of the fact that the international community has entrusted it with guiding the work of the Security Council in the defence of international peace and security. Responsible members of the international community who truly wish to see a peaceful conclusion of the conflict in our region must demand that Syria immediately halt its support for the terrorist groups to which it grants safe harbour in its territory and abide scrupulously by its international obligations under Council resolutions.

I do not believe it redundant to stress again that Israel has taken extensive measures in fulfilment of its obligations under resolutions 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002). One needs only to exercise the slightest scrutiny or open a newspaper to see that the Palestinians have not taken even one step and that Chairman Arafat has yet to lift a finger to fight terror.

This is why we find ourselves in the current predicament. This was in part predictable. Through most of April and May, attention was focused solely on ensuring Israeli compliance with the resolutions of the Council, while the Palestinians succeeded, by making utterly false and misleading allegations, in deflecting attention from their failure to take even minimal steps to end the campaign of terrorism. Rather than holding the Palestinian side accountable for deliberately misleading the Council and flouting its resolutions, it seems that today we are continuing the ritual of intense scrutiny of Israeli actions while wilfully ignoring Palestinian actions.

Palestinian duplicity reached unprecedented heights with two unbelievable incidents in the past two weeks. The first occurred in Ramallah, where, just a few weeks after the publication of documentary proof of the financial and logistical support provided by high officials of the Palestinian Authority to known terrorists, Israeli forces discovered an explosives laboratory in a building belonging to Force 17, Chairman Arafat's personal security force. More than 10 powerful explosive charges in various stages of production, along with bags of explosives, documents and Israeli army uniforms, were discovered in the building. The Permanent Observer of Palestine, in his letter to the Secretary-General dated 10 June 2002, responded with a strongly-worded condemnation not of the clear intention of official Palestinian elements to

carry out terrorist attacks Israeli civilians but of the Israeli operation that foiled that plan. Can there be any evidence more damning than that the very force charged with fighting Palestinian terrorism is constructing and operating explosives laboratories for Palestinian suicide bombers?

Despite the protestations of the Permanent Observer of Palestine, the discovery of the explosives confirms the necessity of taking action to protect Israeli citizens from the threat of terrorist attacks. Unfortunately, the only thing separating the next Palestinian suicide bomber from his Israeli victims is the pre-emptive actions of the Israeli security forces.

The second incident was Chairman Arafat's unbelievable invitation for Hamas and Islamic Jihad to join his Cabinet. Those two organizations — internationally recognized as terrorist organizations committed to the destruction of the State of Israel, dedicated to murdering Israeli civilians as widely as possible and completely opposed to any peaceful settlement of the conflict in the Middle East — should have been dismantled in accordance with agreements reached between the parties and resolutions of the Security Council. Rather than arresting their leaders and confiscating their weapons — as is his obligation — Chairman Arafat has instead bestowed unprecedented legitimacy upon them by treating them as acceptable political partners.

Though these incidents are unbelievable, they are not altogether surprising. Chairman Arafat remains, as he has always been, caught between his history of terrorism and his aspiration to be a statesman. He pretends to partake of the fruit of peace, but he is nourished by the practice of terrorism. This duality imperils Palestinians and Israelis alike, allowing terrorist networks to thrive while undermining the faith of both peoples in the possibility of peace.

Under such circumstances, what does the Palestinian leadership and the international community expect us to do? Are we supposed to sit back and watch as recognized terrorists freely roam the streets, planning the murder of Israelis? Are we supposed to sit idly while those forces that are supposed to be fighting terror are instead practising terror? Shall we simply ignore the fact that forces under Chairman Arafat's control are manufacturing weapons and explosives while he disingenuously condemns their actions in the media?

Of course, we cannot. Still, we have not forgotten that ultimately Israelis and Palestinians must find a way to live together in peace. It is that consideration that continues to inspire a measure of Israeli restraint. We did not respond following the suicide bombing that killed 15 in Rishon Lezion in order to give the emerging diplomatic initiatives a chance at success. We have welcomed the efforts of responsible parties, including the "quartet", to help move Israel and the Palestinians back to a constructive path.

Israel maintains that all aspects of resolution 1402 (2002) must be implemented together, including a meaningful ceasefire that is bolstered by genuine steps on the part of the Palestinians to end terrorism and incitement and to cooperate with General Zinni in the implementation of the Tenet plan and the Mitchell report, which Israel has accepted, but which the Palestinian side continues to reject. In the absence of full and faithful implementation of resolution 1402 (2002), including all the necessary steps required of both sides, we will be unable to create the proper conditions under which the parties can return to a political process, as called for by the Security Council.

Unfortunately, it is not only the Palestinian leadership that is encouraging the intentional killing of Israeli civilians. Terrorism, whether inspired by Syria or executed by the Palestinians, must be fought relentlessly and unconditionally or all our efforts will be in vain.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Bahrain. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Buallay (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me at the outset to thank you, Mr. President, for quickly responding to the request of the Arab Group, which I am honoured to chair this month, to convene this meeting. I wish you every success in conducting the deliberations of the Council through the current month of June. I would be remiss if I failed to thank the Permanent Representative of Singapore for the wise manner in which he conducted the Council's deliberations throughout the month of May.

The Israeli forces continue to invade areas of the Palestinian Authority. They continue to occupy cities and villages and to kill innocent children, elderly people, young people and women. After committing these crimes, they withdrew from those cities only to

reoccupy them on the pretext of fighting terrorism. The occupation of cities and villages has become such a daily event that the world has grown accustomed to hearing the news, and the media no longer want to cover it.

A few days ago, as Council members know, the Israeli occupation forces reoccupied parts of the territories of the Palestinian Authority, including the city of Ramallah, the temporary headquarters of the Palestinian President. They stormed the headquarters of Mr. Yasser Arafat, President of the Palestinian Authority, using tank shells that blew up three buildings in the presidential compound and damaged the presidential bedroom, meaning that the Israeli occupation forces have actually threatened the Palestinian President's life.

Five days later the occupation forces again swept through the city of Ramallah, laying siege to President Arafat's headquarters only hours prior to the meeting between President George W. Bush and the Israeli Prime Minister. That showed that the Israeli authorities hoped to obstruct the internal reforms of the Palestinian Authority. That act came only a day after the formation of a new Palestinian Government, whose Cabinet ministers were to have been sworn in before the Palestinian President at the presidential headquarters, which was besieged by the Israeli occupation authorities that day.

The occupation authorities have destroyed the infrastructure of the Palestinian Authority. They have displaced thousands of people, making them homeless. Nevertheless, the atrocious attacks against Palestinians civilians and Palestinian cities continue daily. They have become routine. Israeli forces invade cities only to withdraw from them on the same or the following day after causing much damage and destruction.

These acts repeatedly perpetrated by the Israeli forces within the territories of the Palestinian Authority continue unchecked. The world witnesses the demolition of homes sometimes with their inhabitants inside them and stands idly by. The Security Council is called upon, today more than ever before, to assume its responsibility of putting an end to these acts of aggression against a defenceless people who have been made refugees in their own land, which has been occupied.

Acts of aggression and siege imposed by the Israeli army against President Yasser Arafat and his headquarters in Ramallah constitute yet another attempt by the Israeli occupying forces to undermine and paralyse all efforts aimed at establishing a just and comprehensive peace in the region. The grave message being sent by the Israeli Prime Minister to the world is that no one but Israel is entitled to peace and security. The Prime Minister wants to erode the Palestinian Authority, thereby preventing it from putting the Palestinian house in order and preventing all attempts to enter into serious negotiations on the establishment of a Palestinian State, whose features were defined in resolution 1397 (2002), adopted this year.

The Council bears a special responsibility with regard to the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem, in the light of the Israeli Government's defiance of Security Council resolutions — including the recent resolution 1402 (2002), which stressed, among many issues, the need to stop the violence and to resume the peace process — and following the Israeli Government's failure to implement resolution 1403 (2002), which called for the implementation of resolution 1402 (2002), and to implement all other resolutions, including resolution 1405 (2002), which welcomed the initiative of the Secretary-General to establish a fact-finding team to shed light on what happened in Jenin — an initiative which has not materialized and which Israel, unfortunately, has yet to implement. Since Israel continues to commit irresponsible acts, including war crimes and State terror, it has become incumbent upon the Council to intervene immediately to put an end to such acts. That could be done by requesting the Israeli Government to implement the relevant Security Council resolutions. The international community must also strongly condemn recent Israeli acts — aimed at destroying the Palestinian Authority so that no final settlement between the parties can be found — with a view to ending the bloodshed that has been allowed to continue for so long.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): Before giving the floor to the next speaker inscribed on my list, I should like to point out that during today's debate, I intend to give the floor to speakers in the following manner: two Council members will be given the floor in alternation with three United Nations Member States. Therefore, the next speaker on my list, from among the Council members, is the representative of Norway.

Mr. Kolby (Norway): The cycle of violence continues unabated in the Middle East. The number of terrorist attacks carried out by Palestinian extremist groups is again increasing, which is undermining the peace efforts. The Palestinian Authority and the Palestinian people must make renewed efforts to halt the terrorist attacks. Operation Defensive Shield and tightened Israeli closures have left the Palestinian public institutions and economy in ruins. Israel continues to carry out military operations within the A areas. Furthermore, there is a lack of political initiatives from the parties aimed at starting a political dialogue. The outlook is thus bleak, and there is an obvious potential for further deterioration in the overall situation.

As Chair of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for the Coordination of International Assistance to Palestinians, Norway is particularly concerned by the impact that closures and ever-tighter restrictions are having on the Palestinian economy and society. Those measures are making it nearly impossible to revive the Palestinian economy, to rebuild Palestinian institutions and to implement the necessary reforms within the Palestinian Authority. Furthermore, they are seriously hampering the effective functioning of the Palestinian security apparatus, which is instrumental in combating terrorism.

We are also deeply concerned at the new plans related to the movement of people and goods in Palestinian areas, aimed at addressing Israeli security concerns. While recognizing Israel's security concerns, we must keep in mind that focusing on security alone will not solve the conflict and therefore will not lead to improved security.

The implementation of these tighter measures will not give the Israeli people the lasting security they need and deserve. Rather, it will serve to: further destroy the Palestinian society and economy; further accelerate the severe downturn of the Palestinian economy, which already is close to collapse; further complicate or prevent the prompt delivery of basic and urgent goods; further hamper the effective delivery of services by the Palestinian Authority, while putting an even heavier burden on the shoulders of the donor community; and finally, but perhaps most important, contribute to widening the level of distrust between the Palestinian and the Israeli people and their leaders.

In spite of the bleak situation on the ground, there is an increasing international consensus on the way ahead and on the parameters for a final settlement. That gives us reason for cautious optimism. The main elements of what we believe will eventually become the final status must have as a point of departure the final status negotiations at Taba in January 2001, the peace plan of the Arab League summit and Security Council resolution 1397 (2002). Furthermore, the continued leadership of the United States and of the other members of the "quartet" is important in coordinating and furthering international peace efforts.

In that regard, Norway believes that convening an international peace conference could be one of several steps in the process ahead. In order to make a substantial contribution to the peace process, a conference must be well prepared and must have realistic goals. We feel that a three-pronged parallel approach, focusing on political, security and economic issues, is the right way ahead. A conference will be only the beginning of a process that should lead to a resumption of real final-status negotiations. For its part, Norway, as Chair of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee, is ready to support an eventual peace conference in any way possible.

However, the strong will of the international community to assist in finding a final settlement cannot replace the parties' own efforts. We welcome cautious Palestinian moves to reform and strengthen their institutions, but there is still a clear need for stronger leadership to combat terrorist attacks. Last night's Israeli withdrawal from Ramallah is welcome, but we urge Israel to implement Council resolutions 1397 (2002) and 1402 (2002) immediately and to withdraw fully from all reoccupied areas. We also call upon the parties to restart, without preconditions, a political dialogue to find a final settlement. We fear that, without the resumption of such a dialogue, there will be a clear danger of dramatic deterioration.

Mr. Tafrov (Bulgaria) (*spoke in French*): As a country associated with the European Union, Bulgaria aligns itself with the statement that will be made shortly by the Permanent Representative of Spain on behalf of the European Union.

Bulgaria is very concerned at the situation in the Middle East. Despite the international community's expectations, the violence is continuing at

unacceptably high levels, and efforts to reduce that violence to more acceptable levels remain ineffective.

The tension in the region is being generated mainly by the terrorist acts perpetrated against Israeli civilians and by the disproportionate use of force in the occupied territories. We are confronted with a vicious circle, with both parties accusing each other and neither one seizing the opportunities offered to them by the international community, and by Security Council resolutions in particular, to turn the situation around and to resume the peace process.

Bulgaria strongly condemns the deadly attacks carried out by Palestinian suicide bombers and is saddened to note that these attacks are almost starting to be perceived in the region as something habitual, even routine. But these suicide attacks only distance the Palestinians even further from their principal objective, which is to live in their own State.

It will be difficult to perceive the Palestinian Authority as a good neighbour and partner as long as the civilian population of Israel continues to live in conditions of increasing insecurity that are affecting its very survival.

Bulgaria is firmly convinced that any forceful response on the part of the Israeli army should be carefully weighed and targeted, because, if this is not the case, the temptation to match force with force will become ever stronger.

The Palestinian Authority should be strengthened and consolidated, not destroyed. In time — not too long from now, we hope — this will allow the Palestinian Authority to become Israel's partner in the pursuit of peace.

Bulgaria commends the initiatives taken by the international community aimed at reducing the tension and at bringing both parties back to the negotiating table. In this respect, we deeply appreciate the efforts being undertaken by Javier Solana, William Burns and George Tenet. It is true that their efforts have not yet yielded any tangible results. However, we remain convinced that a lasting peace can be achieved only through the efforts of the international community, the "quartet" and the Security Council.

In the final analysis, it is the political will of both parties to the conflict that will help the international community to help them.

Let me elaborate on Bulgaria's stance on certain specific problems in the Middle East conflict.

Bulgaria welcomes the idea of holding free, democratic and well-organized elections in the territories controlled by the Palestinian Authority. Such elections would very likely strengthen the legitimacy of the Palestinian Authority and facilitate the peace process.

Bulgaria reiterates that Yasser Arafat's right to move freely throughout the territories controlled by the Palestinian Authority should not be restricted.

Today's situation makes it difficult to achieve unity of action on the part of the Palestinians and strengthens the positions of those among them who are working against the peace process through irresponsible and irrational actions.

Bulgaria welcomes any initiative that might help to reduce tension in the region, including the holding of a high-level conference, which would allow for an end to the violence and for the resumption of the peace process.

Bulgaria is doing its best to remain in contact with the parties involved in the conflict. In this respect, I should like to inform the Council that the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Israel, Mr. Shimon Peres, will visit Sofia on 17 and 18 June and will be received by the highest authorities of my country.

Bulgaria supports the idea contained in resolution 1397 (2002): a vision of a region where two States, Israel and Palestine, live side by side within secure and recognized borders. This is the basis of our policy and underpins our efforts here in the Council.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of the Arab Republic of Egypt. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Aboul Gheit (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): The Security Council is meeting once again to consider the sad and tragic situation prevailing in the Holy Land and in the context of the relationship between the Palestinian and Israeli peoples.

My delegation would like to address this question by touching on a number of points.

First, Egypt wishes to reiterate its opposition to the use of armed force to attempt to break the will of the Palestinians who are resisting the Israeli occupation and the colonization of their land by settlers from Israel and other parts of the world. This will never achieve the objectives of Israel nor provide lasting security for its citizens.

Secondly, the core of the current conflict between Israel and Palestine is the continued Israeli occupation of the territory of Palestine and of all the other territories occupied since 5 June 1967. The achievement of a just and final settlement of this conflict requires as a sine qua non that Israel withdraw from those territories. The mutual acts of violence that are currently being perpetrated will not come to an end so long as this occupation lasts, because this occupation represents an inhuman and immoral act of violence.

Third, all attempts to circumvent or stall a peaceful settlement through manoeuvres and various ploys will be to no avail. The international community will continue to call for an end to the occupation and to settlement activity, as well as for Israel to deal with the occupied territories and their inhabitants in accordance with the terms of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. It is pointless for Israel to cast doubt on the settlement principles that have been unanimously agreed by the international community since the Security Council adopted resolution 242 (1967), on 22 November 1967. We are all aware of the persistent Israeli attempts to cast doubt on that resolution, attempts that are not worthy of a reply.

The resolution establishes the inadmissibility of the acquisition of the territories of others by war. As such it calls upon Israel to withdraw from the territories it occupied in 1967. This was the concept that served as the basis for the convening of the Madrid Conference, in October 1991, at which all agreed to the principle of land for peace as a frame of reference. In this context, it came as no surprise that some in Israel tried to claim that the occupied territories were disputed territories. Resolution 242 (1967) did not refer in any way to such perverse and misleading logic. The Security Council has adopted more than one resolution, in the course of recent years and decades, that reaffirm the applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention to the occupied Palestinian territories.

Fourth, the settlement to be achieved for the Israeli and Palestinian parties must contain their conviction that security cannot be achieved through occupation or attempts at humiliation, repression or other such practices. Security cannot be achieved through the colonization and settlement of Palestinian territories to satisfy certain tendencies or groups in Israel, whether under the pretext of security, religious rights, geography or anything else. Genuine lasting security can only be achieved through the establishment of confidence and the building of bridges, communication, good-neighbourliness, equality and justice.

Fifth, the Palestinian people are the only party entitled to choose Palestinian representatives. Therefore, the legitimacy of the Palestinian leadership emanates from the free choice of the Palestinian people, and not from any other quarters or with the backing of anyone else.

Sixth, Egypt believes that the objective of achieving peace in the Middle East is at a critical crossroads that calls for all parties and the international community, in particular the more influential members of the international community, to make every effort to establish the necessary climate for rebuilding confidence between the Palestinian and Israeli sides and to return once again to genuine political negotiations aimed at reaching a final and comprehensive settlement. We are fully convinced that doing this requires the following.

It requires an attempt to rebuild the confidence that has been lost between the two parties through a number of measures and steps. Those include, for example, Israel's ending its blockade of the Palestinian people and their cities and stopping its incursions into Palestinian cities; the withdrawal of all Israeli forces to the positions they held prior to 28 September 2000; and an end to Israeli assassination, settlement and other subversive activities. There is also a need to end all the acts of violence that currently mar the Palestinian-Israeli relationship.

It also requires the warring parties — with the support of all interested international Powers interested in seeing the establishment of stability and peace in the region — to recognize that the objectives of a final and just settlement will be achieved by ensuring the right of Palestinians to establish a viable Palestinian State, with its capital in East Jerusalem, on the Palestinian

territories occupied since 5 June 1967; as well as an agreement to provide equal security for both the State of Palestine and the State of Israel, which must live in good-neighbourliness, within secure and recognized borders and in the framework of legal and security arrangements to be agreed upon.

It further requires that, once the parties are convinced of its integrated and final objectives, the necessary settlement must be reached in accordance with the agreed frames of reference, foremost among which are the principles contained in resolution 242 (1967), the principles of the Madrid Conference and the Arab initiative adopted at the Beirut Summit. In that regard, there is also a need to reaffirm the vital importance that my country attaches to the question of the timeframe for the achievement of a comprehensive settlement and the need for the necessary guarantees not to impede the implementation of such a settlement. We also wish to reaffirm the need to overcome the tendencies aimed at maintaining the status quo and working under an interim settlement for a long period of time. The latter would basically mean leaving the conflict unresolved and continuing the violence, without hope of seeing an end to it.

Finally, it requires reaching a stable settlement would require providing the largest possible amount of economic support to Palestinians so that they may rebuild their institutions and the infrastructure of their society. We are confident that the international community will seriously take this fact into account.

Seventh, Egypt is committed to the achievement of a comprehensive and lasting peace, to ending the suffering of the Palestinian people and to the provision of security to all without allowing any party to carry out acts of aggression. As President Mubarak said at Camp David on 8 June,

> "We must always keep in mind that there are forces that lack a conviction in this vision. Those forces will continue to attempt to obstruct our efforts to move towards the comprehensive final settlement."

President Mubarak continued on to say that

> "The way to stand up to the enemies of peace is to move forward boldly and with determination in the peace process in order to give new hope to the Palestinian and Israeli peoples of achieving a future of prosperity and stability, away from the specter of violence and confrontation."

My country will continue on that path. We hope and expect that all Powers with influence will shoulder their share of responsibility. Undoubtedly, the Security Council and all its members — and in particular the permanent members — bear special responsibility in this regard.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Malaysia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Hasmy (Malaysia): My delegation is pleased to see you, Sir, presiding over the Security Council this month. We would like to thank you, at this early stage of your presidency, for having convened this meeting of the Council to consider the grave situation in Palestine. We also wish to pay tribute to Ambassador Kishore Mahbubani of the Republic of Singapore for the effective manner in which Singapore conducted the work of the Council during the busy month of May.

My delegation appreciated the statement made earlier by Ambassador Al-Kidwa, the Permanent Observer of Palestine. We are in full agreement with his analysis of the current situation and of the role played by Mr. Sharon in creating the situation in order to serve certain strategic objectives, which are now clear to all.

Malaysia condemns the reoccupation of Nablus, Bethlehem and the refugee camps of Balata and Askar, as well as the incursions into Tulkarm, by the Israeli armed forces. We condemn the attack on and siege of President Arafat's headquarters in Ramallah on 5 June, which were completely uncalled for and unjustifiable and which placed President Arafat in serious danger. Equally deplorable are the imposition of a curfew on the entire city of Ramallah and the continued harassment of its inhabitants. All of these draconian Israeli actions — curfews, raids, mass arbitrary detentions and the destruction of Palestinian structures, including homes, in the occupied Palestinian territory — have caused extreme hardship for the Palestinian people. Such actions have not enhanced the security of the people of Israel. On the contrary, they have provoked violent retaliation from Palestinian militant groups which are beyond the control of the Palestinian Authority, thereby exacerbating the tense situation and locking both sides into a continuing cycle

of violence which prevents efforts towards a peaceful solution.

It should be clear by now that Palestinian militancy cannot be laid at the door of President Arafat, who has repeatedly condemned attacks against Israeli civilians. President Arafat continues to be blamed and demonized, when the root cause of Palestinian militancy and anger towards Israel is Israel's continuing occupation of Palestinian territories, its expansion of illegal settlements in the territories and its continued rejection of an independent and sovereign State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

The Palestinian Authority has clearly condemned recent bombings and refuted Israel's accusation that it was promoting suicide attacks. The Palestinian Authority has declared, before international public opinion, that it considers those attacks to be harmful to the Palestinian cause and struggle and to the image of the Palestinian people. Rather than treating President Arafat as the implacable enemy who must be harassed and intimidated at every turn — or even removed from the scene, as is being openly contemplated — Israel should engage him in constructive dialogue and negotiation. It should do so because, as the elected and undisputed leader of his people, his important — indeed, indispensable — role in the final resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict cannot be denied.

Israel's lack of restraint in its military actions — actions that it is taking amid international efforts to convene a peace conference on the Middle East, as well as efforts by the United States to assist in the rebuilding of the Palestinian administrative and security structures — reflects its commitment to a military, rather than a political, solution. It is patently clear to all, including Israelis, that the eventual establishment of an independent and sovereign State of Palestine is the key to the final resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and that the realization of such a State is only a matter of time.

To continue to deny this inevitability through policies and actions that will result only in more death and destruction and in increased hatred and militancy between the two sides is incomprehensible, to say the least. It is ludicrous for Israel to continue its policy of rendering President Arafat powerless when it wants him to reassert his authority and when his role as the leader of his people is pivotal in any peace process. President Arafat cannot be wished away or replaced by another leader of Mr. Sharon's choice. He must be engaged in any serious and constructive dialogue if a lasting solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is to be found. An international conference, convened for the purpose of resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, will not achieve the desired results without the full participation and active involvement of the elected and undisputed leader of the Palestinian people.

My delegation continues to believe that the dispatch to the occupied Palestinian territories of a United Nations or international peacekeeping or monitoring force is immediately necessary in order to prevent a worsening of the situation on the ground. The presence of a neutral party to prevent further violence is a necessary measure, considering the deep hostility between the sides. Given the utter sense of frustration and despair among the Palestinians, Israel's continued use of brutal force against them would only serve to increase their militancy. To defuse the anger that has understandably been building up over the past two years, the Palestinian people must be given renewed hope and vision for peace, with a definite timetable for an independent Palestinian State through the formulation of a clear road map for a solution, on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978) and the 1991 Madrid Conference terms of reference, based on the principle of land for peace.

Pending a final solution, the concern of the international community must continue to be directed towards the dire humanitarian situation on the ground, which continues to deteriorate and could worsen as a result of the construction by Israel of a 68-mile buffer zone near Jenin, Tulkarm and other cities. Mr. Peter Hansen, the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), has warned that these buffer zones would very seriously hamper the operations of humanitarian agencies or even cause such operations to come to a halt. UNRWA and other humanitarian agencies continue to report on the problem of accessibility on the ground.

My delegation condemns the new restrictive measures which are resulting in the Balkanization of the territories, with nine closed areas in the West Bank and four in Gaza; this aggravates the difficulties and hardships faced by an already overwrought population living in the occupied Palestinian territories.

My delegation continues to encourage and support all international efforts aimed at achieving a just, comprehensive and lasting solution to the conflict, and looks forward to the successful outcome of the initiatives of the United States, the "quartet" and other members of the international community, particularly those in the Middle East region. We continue to urge the Council to fulfil its responsibility by acting decisively to ease the tension and end the cycle of violence. The Council must send a clear and unambiguous message to Israel that it is not all right to continue its military operations against the Palestinian people. It is time for the Council to convey its impatience with Israel for pursuing policies which promote, not the dialogue and negotiation that the entire international community is clamouring for, but more violence and bloodshed, which can only lead to an intensification of the conflict.

Beyond addressing the issue of the suicide bombings, the Council must consider the larger picture. In this regard, the Council must initiate or support efforts towards resolving the conflict once and for all.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank the representative of Malaysia for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of the Kingdom of Morocco. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Bennouna (Morocco) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, on Syria's assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. We are fully confident that you will discharge your functions successfully.

I also take this opportunity to pay a tribute to Ambassador Kishore Mahbubani for his efficient stewardship of the Council last month.

The Security Council is once again considering the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories and the means necessary to ensure the implementation of its relevant resolutions. The Council is meeting against the overwhelming backdrop of fast-moving events that are generating further concern and fear in the international community for the future of that region and its peoples. Whenever some semblance of calm emerges, the logic of force reimposes itself in the absence of genuine will on the part of the Israeli Government to break the cycle of violence and reprisals. This has delayed the development of the sincere initiative that has been proposed to revive hope for peace and security in the Middle East.

Once again, Israeli forces have reoccupied Palestinian territories from which they withdrew only yesterday, beginning with the city of Ramallah, in order to sow terror and destruction; to round up and displace anyone indiscriminately; and to foment despair and frustration and make the lives of Palestinians an intolerable hell. The shopkeeper cannot open his store; the worker cannot work for his livelihood; the student cannot go to school; the patient cannot secure medicine or medical treatment.

All these practices hearken back to the tragic and painful events that overwhelmed the occupied Palestinian territories less than two months ago, especially in the Jenin refugee camp, concerning which we continue to await the Secretary-General's report assessing responsibility for the violations committed by the Israeli forces against Palestinian civilians. The almost daily tragedies in the Middle East remain linked to the reality of the occupation that Israel continues to impose, in flagrant violation of international humanitarian law, especially the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Times of War. Unless and until the Israeli Government is convinced of that fact and complies accordingly, the lives of innocent civilians in Palestine and Israel will remain the targets of violence and the impulse for revenge. It is the duty of us all to end that cycle.

Since coming to power, the Israeli Government has followed a pattern of behaviour aimed at undermining the Palestinian Authority, at torpedoing the prospects for the establishment of a Palestinian State and at removing itself from the internationally accepted peace framework. These aims have prompted the Israeli Government to insinuate that the territories occupied by Israel are disputed and no longer occupied lands from which it must withdraw. Such logic betrays the true intentions of the Government of Israel and the extent to which it flouts international will and the authority of the Security Council.

The Council has time and again emphasized the need for Israel to withdraw from occupied Arab territories on the basis of resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1397 (2002), the foundations of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the region. More

than ever before, the Council must strive in earnest to impose respect for its resolutions by Israel in order to allay the impression that Israel is above the law.

It is a strange irony that the Palestinian Authority should be called upon to control security, avert acts of violence and undertake constitutional reforms while being confined to its headquarters and targeted by shells, while its President is insulted and its ministers are prevented from performing their official functions. The security and interests of Israel will not be attained by besmirching the credibility of the Palestinian Authority and undermining its status. Quite the contrary, the Authority must be respected and treated as a full partner in peace-building. If the Authority is to perform that role, the international community must provide the urgent and necessary assistance to reverse the destruction caused by Israel, to revive the Palestinian economy and to strengthen its infrastructure so as to meet the Palestinian people's basic needs.

Despite these long odds, the Palestinian Authority has acted in good faith in condemning acts of violence against Israeli civilians and in arresting suspects implicated in such operations. Most recently, some structural reforms have been undertaken within the Palestinian Authority, including the constitution of a new Palestinian Government. The Arab side has also submitted its vision, as embodied in the initiative of Crown Prince Abdullah of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which was embraced by the Arab summit in Beirut. Arab leaders have acted subsequently to end the violence and to ensure negotiations.

Morocco has always acted in line with its values and convictions to combat terrorism and to condemn acts of terror in all their forms and regardless of the justification put forward. We have said all along that the end in no way justifies the means and that the harming of civilians, be they Palestinians or Israelis, is a source of grief to all mankind. At the same time and in the same vein, however, we have said that ending terrorism will require, above all, an end to Israel's occupation of Palestinian and other Arab territories; the resumption of negotiations; and compliance with the principles and framework of the peace process, especially the principle of land for peace.

In an effort to calm the situation and to revive hope in the peace process, His Majesty King Mohammed VI of Morocco, the Chairman of the Jerusalem Committee, has striven to contain the crisis and to urge the parties to resume dialogue and to develop the most appropriate framework for negotiations.

Against that backdrop, Morocco has supported the concept of an international conference and has expressed its willingness to cooperate with all parties concerned to create the conditions for a successful conference. Morocco also welcomes the contributions made in this respect by the United States, the European Union, Russia and the Secretary-General, all of whom are strongly backing the Middle East peace process.

We consider that the time has indeed come to move forward, to give clear form to the proposals and to rally international support for implementing them in order to establish the peace we all desire, on the basis of Israel's withdrawal from all territories occupied since 1967, of the establishment of a Palestinian State with Jerusalem as its capital and of the restoration to Syria and to Lebanon of their occupied territories.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank the representative of Morocco for the kind words he addressed to me.

There are a number of speakers remaining on my list. Given the lateness of the hour, and with the consent of the Council, I intend to suspend the meeting. The Security Council will continue its consideration of the item on its agenda following the adjournment of the private meeting between the members of the Security Council and the countries contributing troops to the United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina, scheduled for 3.30 p.m. today in Conference Room 4.

The meeting was suspended at 1.25 p.m.